GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3103
ANSWERED ON:16.03.2001
REFORMS UNDER WTO REGIME
SURESH RAMRAO JADHAV (PATIL)

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have taken move to secure any reforms under WTO regime;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the efforts made/propose to be made to achieve the objectives?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH)

(a) to (c) : India has been proposing suitable reforms in the multilateral trading system during the mandated negotiations and mandated reviews as have been provided in the various WTO agreements, so as to sub-serve India`sinterests. The mandated negotiations on Agriculture and Services have commenced in the year 2000. Under the ongoing negotiation on Agriculture, India has submitted its proposals which aim to protect its food and livelihood security by having flexibility for domestic policy measures taken for poverty alleviation, rural development, rural employment and diversification of agriculture while also aiming to create necessary safeguards for protecting domestic producers from surge in imports or from steep fall in import prices. The proposals also aim to facilitate agricultural exports by seeking substantial reductions in tariffs and substantial reductions in trade distorting domestic support as well as elimination of the export subsidies in the developed countries.

Under the mandated negotiations on Services, India`smain objective is to seek substantial further liberalisation in the movement of natural persons especially professionals and skilled personnel under Mode 4 of the Services and a proposal in this regard has already been submitted in WTO by India. Under the mandated negotiation and mandated reviews under the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement, India`s main objective is to seek ahigher level of protection as already provided to wines and spirits to the geographical indications in other products. .

Besides, India has been in the forefront in demanding that implementation related concerns of the developing countries regarding the WTO agreements should be resolved satisfactorily. The implementation concerns broadly relate to the inequities and imbalances in the existing WTO agreements, non-realisation of anticipated benefits from the WTO Agreements and the non-operational and non-binding nature of most of the Special and Differential (S&D) provisions in favour of developing countries. The implementation related concerns were highlighted by India through its proposals which were cosponsored by 11 other like-minded group of countries in the preparatory process leading to the Seattle Ministerial Conference in November 1999. The General Council of WTO in its May 2000 resolution has set up a work programme in WTO to address these implementation related concerns of the developing countries.